

Harbord Village Residents' Association Spring General Meeting
Tuesday May 18, 2010 7 p.m.
Kensington Gardens

1. Chair's welcome

Tim Grant welcomed all present.

2. Area Caucuses and reports

The Area Caucuses met and each reported as follows:

a. North West

- Would like to get rid of concrete planters and replace with pinches in the area which may be planted.
- Would like to see more trees planted on Bloor between Brunswick and Bathurst.
- Suggest the installation of a garden on the City part of the property next to the Brunswick House, on the Brunswick Avenue flankage.
- Concerns continue about the noise and commotion at the north end of Brunswick Avenue at Bloor Street.

b. North East

- Complaints about vandalism, mirrors smashed off vehicles, back lane arson behind Robert Street.
- Noise from the Brunswick House.
- Use of the Robert Street park, owned by the U of T, concern that the University will use the park during the Pan Am games for women's hockey, which would mean significant intensification of use of that park.

c. South Central

- Graffiti on Croft Street, should try to identify people who are doing the graffiti.
- Garbage collection problems were identified. The City garbage collectors are throwing recyclables on the street, and they are leaving the bins in the middle of the sidewalks making them impassable.
- The parkette at Brunswick and College may get a facelift.

d. South West

- Anonymous garbage has been left around, and the problem seems to be more prevalent.
- Students living in neighbourhood, the owners don't care about the property, so the properties are not taken care of.
- Noise, garbage, back deck parties on tenant patios.

e. South East

- Traffic issues were raised with examples: due to the Wilcocks closure for pedestrians, and there is no left turn from the south creating difficulty for people trying to get home; also the bike lane closes Sussex Mews to vehicular traffic; traffic at the Lord Lansdowne drop-off; maybe Russell should be one way.
- Concerns about digging up of Major Street, which has not yet been repaired.
- Would like safety cameras on streets.

3. Reports

Gus Sinclair was thanked for providing the microphone.

Allan Reynolds, from the Palmerston Area Residents Association, was welcomed to the meeting.

Tree Committee

Margaret Proctor reported about tree projects this Spring. She was reporting for Dini Biggs who could not attend.

- offering back yard tree planting, this will be last year, deadline is May 22nd. People pay \$20 and the Committee members do the planting for residents.
- Hoping for a good summer for trees, with lots of rain to keep them alive. Have an Adopt a Street Tree program, residents and businesses can sign up to do water trees in front of their properties.
- \$1,500 left to plant trees in public spaces, e.g. Central Tech was done. If residents have ideas, let the Committee know. They are forming a sub-committee for this purpose and would like to get rid of concrete boxes on the streets, but to get pinches installed instead and to plant them e.g. Robert and Russell Streets. Want the City to take out the tree boxes and residents will landscape the areas.
- Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests (LEAF) is planning a tree walk on June 13, 2010, to draw attention to great trees. It will begin at 1 p.m., starting from north-west corner of Major and College. Information is on the HVRA website.
- Trees in backyards are subject to problems of construction, but sometimes people don't pay attention to the impact of construction on the trees. There should be planning and care. Major and Brunswick has a wonderful burloak tree, likely 300 years old. Now that area is under construction and it will impact the roots because there is a dumpster on the ground. The City Forestry Inspectors did not do much. Now the owner wants to pave over a parking pad next to the tree. This is being watched.

Water testing for Lead

Jane Perdue reported that she had got brochures from the City re lead in the water pipes and they were available at the meeting. Residents can call and get a testing kit for houses older than 50 years. Residents have to register.

Laneways

Gus Sinclair reported on the plans for the naming of the laneways in the area. The idea is to follow the example of Rose Rodrigues, who got a section of lane named after her grandfather, who had lived there for a long time. The police would like house numbers on the back in the laneways behind the houses in order to make it easier to identify where a problem may be. Also, since laneways are not continuous, each part of the lane should be named so that police and firefighters can find the laneway that may need assistance. Gus and a committee will map out where the laneways are, and then may look for ideas for names e.g. After countries of people who have lived in the area, songbirds, trees, etc. The Committee hopes to have a plan within the next year and will be consulting with residents.

A question was asked about private lanes and how those would be dealt with. Gus indicated some were rights of way, not City assumed lanes.

Croft Lane has a different numbering system. Garages on Croft near College – don't know how those should be numbered.

Louis Laki Lane will be unveiled on **June 12th at 2pm** and residents are welcome to attend.

Market

Gus Sinclair reported that June 2nd is the first market day of the season and there will be 6 vendors to start, but more by the end of the month.

Heritage Designation

Leslie Thompson reported that there is an interest on Major Street in getting a heritage designation and residents have been taking pictures. Residents can sign up if interested. The City is changing some protocols, but things will move forward eventually.

Flower pots on Harbord

Wendy Smith reminded residents of the large resin flower-filled flower pots that used to beautify Harbord Street. The pots, which were placed on the street a decade ago by the Harbord Street B.I.A. (Business Improvement Area), have disappeared over time (approx. 10 remain) and the B.I.A. volunteer group which had planted them disbanded a few years ago. Wendy Smith reported plans for the HVRA to reconstitute the flower pot committee, and now has an agreement with the B.I.A. that the merchants will pay for flowers, potting soil and perhaps replacement pots while the residents will form a new HVRA Volunteer Flower Pot Committee to plant and care for the pots. In April HVRA submitted a 2010 budget to the B.I.A. to do three plantings of the surviving pots and to purchase and plant additional replacement pots (which are expensive), for an estimated total of about \$5,000. The B.I.A. responded that it could give the committee \$1,000 this year. Residents were invited to join the committee and/or to just volunteer to come out and plant pots.

4. Volunteer Appreciation Evening

Richard Gilbert spoke about the success of the residents' association and that a lot of volunteers work to make it successful. For last several years the volunteers have been recognized, but by the Chair, Gus Sinclair, in his personal capacity. No one knew how it was paid for, but it was paid for by the Chair himself.

With a change in the leadership of the Residents Association it has been suggested that the HVRA pay for the volunteer appreciation. It has in the past cost about \$200 per year. We would like to propose that the membership approve a maximum of \$400 per year to host the volunteer appreciation evening, to which about 50 people come. It would be the Association's event in the future. The HVRA Board felt that this was an issue that should be brought to the membership for discussion and a motion.

Motion: That the Chair be authorized to spend up to \$400 per year for a volunteer appreciation event to be held in November, or at whatever time the Chair feels is appropriate.

Moved by Richard Gilbert and Seconded by Leslie Thompson. Unanimously approved.

5. Guest Speaker, Caroline Moss, Re Green Roofs

Caroline Moss indicated that the City of Toronto has become the first city to have a by-law that requires new large buildings to have green roofs. In the past the City has had incentives to encourage the building of green roofs. They are very helpful in reducing the amount of water run-off during storm events. They also add to biodiversity and reduce the temperature in the city.

The history of green roofs was provided. The components of a green roof were outlined. The benefits of a green roof were discussed. Green roofs on a sloped roof are not easy. Flat roofs will need more structural support, so it is best to plan one during a renovation when the roof can be built to support a green roof. Sun, wind, roof slope, water proofing, and access to the roof are all considerations.

A building permit is required because of the load on the housing structure. Construction standards must be met. Information is available on the City of Toronto website. People would likely need to have a green roof contractor to install one, and need skilled trades people. There is a City grant available through the eco-incentive program – for houses and commercial properties and it is for approximately \$50 per sq. ft.

Cost depends on what is to be planted and may range from \$15 per sq. ft. and up.

A green roof can last indefinitely.

6. Guest Speaker, Richard Murphy, Aetna Pest Control, Re Termites

Richard Murphy reported that there are termites in this neighbourhood but it is a very controllable problem. Termites like moisture, so it is important to keep foundations dry, and to keep excessive moisture away from around chimneys. One should grade around the house, keep mulch away from the home, and build according to Code so that there is no wood-soil contact. Dryer vents are not an issue in terms of creating moisture around a house. They go out the wall and into the air. The concern is moisture penetration that does not go away, especially around foundations.

Signs of an infestation include evidence of mud tubes which the termites build to protect themselves from air exposure. One may also see small mud spots on drywall, which show where the termite has burrowed to the surface and then closed the hole with some mud again.

If termites are found or suspected, a professional should be called in to address the problem. They look at the degree of infestation, the level of damage, check moisture levels, check construction forms, etc. Once a residence has a termite infestation a homeowner should have periodic inspections, and possible re-treatments after 5 years.

Foam insulation is something that termites can burrow through, so it is a problem. There is termite resistant foam available from the U.S. The industry is looking for less toxic products to use, and is working with Health Canada to get new products approved which would be termite-specific.

Cards and brochures were left for residents to pick up.

7. Councillor Adam Vaughan's Report:

Dale Duncan was recognized as a wonderful representative for Adam Vaughan, and was thanked by the HVRA, and Mr. Vaughan.

Mr. Vaughan spoke about the compost having been delivered to Margaret Fairley Park. This year the compost is a good mix. Residents were encouraged to go and pick some up.

The park north of Harbord on Brunswick, Sally Bird Parkette, has received funding through the federal infrastructure funding program. The plan for its refurbishing has been through community consultation and it will get implemented soon.

The north part of Brunswick Avenue issues are being dealt with. Future Bakery has applied for an extension of the hours of its patio. The residents were not in favour and nothing will be done without a resident poll.

The Annex Live is getting a small patio, with a 9 p.m. closing.

A new student residence is being proposed for the south side of College at Spadina, a 41 storey building. It is being reviewed but the developers are just testing the water on this project. The University owns the site and it will not want to get into a fight with residents as it has other more pressing projects to address. It is likely that there will be a firm "no" to this project.

One Spadina Circle and the UTS sites are being considered for development by U of T. There have been discussions and meetings about them. They are not imminent projects. The U of T is planning on cleaning up the garbage and recycling projects at the One Spadina Circle building.

The bike lane issue has been explored. A contra flow lane on Brunswick was being considered, and there was a very split view among residents on this idea. A cycling audit is being contemplated, as well as a bike census. In the interim 20 kms of bike lanes were approved by Council. Sharrow symbols will be put in on four blocks of Harbord where the street has been deemed not wide enough to accommodate bike lanes (e.g. Near the Harbord Bakery). Bike lane markings will go through intersections and bike boxes will be installed at traffic lights.

The City is waiting for a report on bike lanes on Bloor Street. The City is also looking at a possible segregated bike route on Spadina, and that is being studied.

A question was asked about Harbord and Bathurst, regarding the lights at that intersection because of accidents there, and seeking an advance green light. It was reported that a study was done on it a few years ago, but with imminent implementation of bike boxes, there will be no right turn on red lights. Incremental changes may be made. Advance greens are being taken out across the city because they encourage more traffic. This intersection will be studied further with the implementation of the bike lanes on Harbord.

A concern was raised about vandalism around Brunswick and Bloor Streets. The Councillor advised that people being turned away from the Brunswick House may be going elsewhere in the area now. The City is not extending any liquor licences for establishments in the area because of the problems with that corner, it is being very vigilant policing those who run the Brunswick House, and will not likely agree to any other licences for that company.

The Councillor was asked for more police presence in the neighbourhood, as in the Entertainment District. It was explained that that policing is very expensive and is simply not feasible. Hence, the City is trying to use other strategies to ensure that the Brunswick and Bloor area does not develop any further into a club district.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.